SARL NEWS SUNDAY 26 JANUARY 2003

You are listening to Amateur Radio Station ZS6SRL of the South African Radio League, the National society for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is broadcast every Sunday at 08:15 Central Africa Time (CAT) in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English.

This bulletin is also available on the website of the SARL at www.sarl.org.za and on packet bulletin boards.

SARL NEWS invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to amateurs to news@sarl.org.za not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date. It would be appreciated if you could do it in both Afrikaans and English. Please note as from February, only news items sent to news@sarl.org.za will be accepted.

SILENT KEY

It is with regret that the Council of the SARL has to announce the untimely death of Harrigan Walpole ZS5CBW, son of Brian Walpole ZS5BOJ and Dawn Walpole ZS5BPG in a freak car accident in London England on Saturday 11 January.

To Heidi, wife of Harrigan, Brian, Dawn and Harrigans's sister Samantha, other relatives and friends, our sincere condolences.

PAUSE

In the news today:

AUSSIE HAMS HANDLE RADIO TRAFFIC FOR FIRE AUTHORITY

"LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD" PROGRAM REACHED TEST STAGE

AMATEUR RADIO CLUBS RUN RAE COURSE

DATES TO REMEMBER

Stay tuned for more details on these and other news items.

You are tuned to ZS6SRL. Visit the SARL Website or call the SARL office which is open on weekdays from nine to thirteen hours (09:00 to 13:00) at 0(zero)11 675 2393 for details on how to join, book sales and all related amateur radio activities.

The news follows in detail:

AUSSIE HAMS HANDLE RADIO TRAFFIC FOR FIRE AUTHORITY

A series of fires have been burning in rugged alpine forest country in north-east Victoria (VK3) for 18 days with hundreds of firefighters battling the outbreaks.

For the past week volunteer radio amateurs have been pitching in by operating fire fighting service radio communications equipment.

With extreme fire conditions expected over the Australia Day holiday long weekend 25-27 January, there is an ongoing requirement for the hams to use their skills and handle essential and logistic radio traffic.

Hundreds of firefighters battling the outbreaks in the heat and dense smoke, which for most of the past four days greatly reduced visibility limiting the use of aerial water bombers.

With no end in sight to the fire emergency many of the residents in a number of towns in the region have fled to safer areas as conditions worsen with high temperatures, single digit relative humidity and high winds.

The emergency service arm of the Wireless Institute of Australia, WICEN (Wireless Institute Civic Emergency Network) has radio amateurs are on duty at three centres - Mt Beauty, Corryong and Ovens - operating radios and handling emergency traffic.

WIA Victoria President, Jim Linton VK3PC said the forest lands firefighting agency, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) called on WICEN Victoria to provide operators to run its radio communications and free up its personnel for other duties.

WICEN State Coordinator, John Kerr VK3BAF at Mt Beauty reports that the assignment operating the trunk radio system has at times involved 12 to 14 hour shifts.

He says the WICEN Victoria members have fitted in well and their contribution is much appreciated by DSE.

Meantime WICEN Victoria has drawn up a list of volunteers to replace the existing teams in the field during the weekend, and for deployment elsewhere in Victoria if needed.

The next update report is to be posted on the WIA Victoria website www.wiavic.org.au on 26 January.

"LOGBOOK OF THE WORLD" PROGRAM REACHED TEST STAGE

According to the ARRL news the long-anticipated "Logbook of the World" (LoTW)–the ARRL's secure electronic contact-confirmation system–took a major leap toward public release this month with several weeks of limited–or "alpha"–testing. Dozens of Amateur Radio operators checked out a preliminary version of the LoTW software, which is still under development. Once it's ready, LoTW will provide a means for participants to qualify for awards such as DXCC or WAS without having to first collect hard-copy QSL cards.

Linked via e-mail, the LoTW testers spent two weeks registering their call signs, uploading logs and attempting to push the system to extremes. One tester was amazed at its robust nature after he uploaded a complete station log of about 320 000 QSOs. "I sent this blob expecting it to croak the server, but it didn't!" he said.

Logbook of the World Project Leader Wayne Mills, N7NG, says LoTW won't spell the end of QSL cards. Instead, he says, it will provide an avenue for increased speed and accuracy for hams chasing awards, as well as remove some chances for human error that can occur in the traditional process.

Unlike electronic QSLing systems now in use, LoTW is not set up to exchange QSL "cards" via the Internet. The main idea is that ARRL will maintain a secure log database that will be constantly updated by DXers, contesters, DXpeditions and thousands of individual amateurs.

LoTW beta testing for the general Amateur Radio public is expected to begin soon. The ARRL has not announced a specific inauguration date for Logbook of the World.

The keen DXers are sure to be anxiously awaiting the implementation of this system.

AMATEUR RADIO CLUBS RUN RAE COURSES

The Sandton Amateur Radio Club will again run an RAE course starting on Wednesday 5th February.

Lectures are held every Wednesday evening at the National Amateur Radio Centre, Radiokop. For further details please contact Graham ZS6GJH at 082 441 6989 or email zs6gjh@icon.co.za.

The Magalies Radio Amateur Club will start a course through Afrikaans in Pretoria on Saturday the 8th February at 14:00 in their club house at the corner of Breyer Ave and Mill street, Waverley, Pretoria. Prospective students may contact Marten, ZS6ZY, at tel 012 332 2104 or George, ZS6NE, at tel 012 664 4155 for more information.

SARL HF FIELD DAY

The first leg of the SARL HF Field Day will take place over the weekend of 08 and 09 February 2003. The rules have been changed with regard to setting up the field station and power multipliers and bonus points have been added to the scoring. The rules are in the new contest manual that should be available on the SARL website within the coming week if it is not there already.

SARL KID'S DAY ACTIVITY

Please don t forget the SARL Kids Day that takes place on Saturday 8 February. Please take note of the new date.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR SARLNEWS

The address for sarlnews at the Hotmail site, will be relinquished this week. With immediate effect news contributions may be sent to news@sarl.org.za As from this week this will be the only address to be used for contributions.

This bulletin was compiled by Martin, ZS6ABU and read by …….from …… as a service to radio amateurs, short wave listeners and electronic enthusiasts.

The SARL invites you to listen to Amateur Radio Mirror International on 21560, 9750, and 7082 kHz and 145,625 MHz in East London, 145,650 in Durban and 145,750 MHz in the Pretoria area. A repeat broadcast can be heard on Mondays at 20:00 CAT on 3215 kHz.

ARMI is sponsored by Telkom and Sentech.

Also remember to join the Net of the President of the SARL which will be on the air for the first time this year at 12:00 today on 7082 kHz. The next net will take place on Sunday the 23rd February.

You have been listening to ZS6SRL, thank you for joining us. Also many thanks to those persons who supply news for our bulletins and the amateurs who relay the bulletins so regularly.

Goodbye everyone.

/EX